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NEWS RELEASE

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JUVENILE SENTENCED AS ADULT FOR DRUG SHIPMENTS TO FRESNO BUSINESS

FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that MARK REYES, 20, of Pomona, California was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison and 36 months supervised release after pleading guilty and agreeing to be treated as an adult for his involvement in a shipment of about 110 pounds of Mexican marijuana to Fresno businessman OSCAR ROSALES, 41, the leader of a drug-trafficking organization dedicated to the interstate distribution of marijuana. At the time of his involvement, REYES resided in San Luis, Arizona on the U.S.-Mexico border and was 17 years old. REYES was charged as a juvenile under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which was enacted in the 1970s in response to a rise in serious crimes committed by juveniles.

The investigation was conducted by the Fresno Methamphetamine Task Force (FMTF), a high-intensity-drug-trafficking area initiative, and is comprised of law enforcement agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Fresno Police Department, Fresno and Madera County Sheriff's Departments, California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, and California Highway Patrol.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is assigned to Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force prosecutions.

The FMTF investigation led to the seizure of approximately 5,330 pounds of marijuana having a value of approximately \$12,128,000, real properties and cash worth \$2,410,782, and 29 firearms. REYES is the last of 45 federal defendants charged as a result of the FMTF investigation to be sentenced. According to court documents, REYES was responsible for smuggling at least two loads of marijuana from Mexico into the United States and shipping them to ROSALES at his business, Exclusive Sounds, a direct TV and stereo business located in northwest Fresno.

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, drug trafficking organizations increasingly are using juveniles to smuggle marijuana across the Arizona portion of the U.S.-Mexico border in an attempt to insulate themselves for criminal prosecution. The juveniles are typically clean-cut, well-dressed individuals who resemble students.

"The United States Attorney's Office is committed to taking a proactive approach when dealing with juveniles involved in international drug trafficking or who commit other serious crimes," said United States Attorney Scott. "Drug trafficking organizations should no longer assume that they will evade prosecution by using juveniles to carry out their illicit activity."

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